

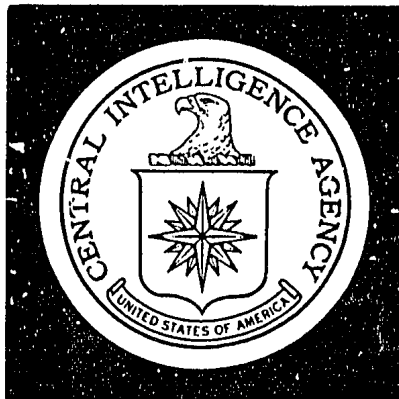
25X1

Approved For Release 2005/08/22 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100100065-4

Approved For Release 2005/08/22 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100100065-4

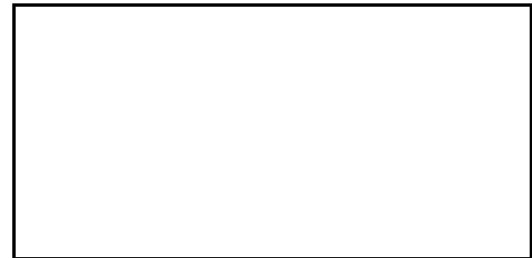
**Secret**

Σ



DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

DPSP



25X1

# Intelligence Memorandum

*Mutual Troop Reductions in Europe:  
The Soviet View*

**Secret**

87  
19 June 1971  
No. 1708/71

## WARNING

-This document contains information affecting the national defense of the United States, within the meaning of Title 18, sections 793 and 794, of the US Code, as amended. Its transmission or revelation of its contents to or receipt by an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

GROUP 1  
EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC  
DOWNGRADING AND  
DECLASSIFICATION

~~SECRET~~

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
19 June 1971

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Mutual Troop Reductions in Europe: The Soviet View

Introduction

The Soviets developed the issue of force reductions in Europe as a useful diplomatic device in the 1950s and continued to initiate proposals on the subject until the early 1960s. By 1965, however, the Soviets had abandoned the idea of force reductions, in part because they hoped for unilateral US reductions and in part because they feared the accusation that mutual cuts would help the US shift troops to Vietnam. Soviet coolness toward reductions prevailed until last year, and the USSR saw NATO proposals on the subject primarily as a tactical counter to its own call for a Conference on European Security (CES).

Only in June 1970 did the Pact respond favorably to NATO's overtures and, together with renewing its call for a Conference on European Security (CES), recommend discussions on "reducing foreign armed forces on the territory of European states." The issue was then left dormant by the Soviets until this spring, when party chief Brezhnev raised the subject in his report to the 24th Party Congress, which allowed for discussion of limiting indigenous as well as foreign forces. This was followed in quick succession by other statements of Soviet interest in the subject by Premier Kosygin and lesser officials. In a speech at Tblisi in mid-May, Brezhnev bluntly urged the NATO countries to "start negotiations" on force reductions. Then, on 11 June, the party chief stated outright that the talks could treat both foreign and indigenous forces. According to

Note: This memorandum was prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence and coordinated within CIA.

SECRET

SECRET

initial reports, Ambassador Dobrynin's remarks to Secretary Rogers on 16 June did not expand significantly upon Soviet thinking, but again registered Soviet enthusiasm for force reductions. Now this topic, which Moscow defines as "reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe," is regularly put forward as a "Soviet initiative."

SECRET

SECRET

The Political Uses of Mutual Force Reductions

1. Despite years of proposing force reductions in Europe, the Soviets themselves may have not yet defined precisely what they want or even how they intend to proceed. They do seem intent, however, on using their present momentum to recapture the diplomatic initiative in Europe. Since the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the USSR has uninterruptedly pursued a course of trying to relax tensions in Europe in ways which, with minimal risk to its own position in the eastern half of the continent, would open up the western half to increased Soviet influence. The interaction of this policy and the FRG's Ostpolitik, however, has created a situation in which Berlin has become the sticking point for the entire detente process. Failure to make substantial progress on the status of the divided city has bogged down Soviet initiatives for a CES as well as ratification of Bonn's treaties with Moscow and Warsaw acknowledging the permanence of postwar borders. Western success in maintaining these linkages has put the USSR under considerable pressure either to make concessions on Berlin or to find another issue that would get around this problem and give a new push to detente. Reduction of forces, precisely because it is such a long-standing NATO proposal, is such an issue. Also, a Soviet initiative is at this stage a sensible way to respond to Western pressures for diminished forces since unyielding opposition to this notion would reflect badly on Soviet "detentist" policy in Europe.

2. The Soviets expect political gains from the process--which they recognize will be protracted--of arranging negotiations on mutual force reductions. In propaganda terms, they have gained a temporary advantage over NATO and can now pose as being more eager and ready for progress than the West. Moreover, they expect that this posture will help them on other detente issues. Moscow probably also hopes its proposal will generate strains within NATO and that the opportunities for mischief-making in NATO will increase as negotiations draw near. Finally, the prospect of negotiations on the issue will underscore to the West

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

Europeans the "temporary" character of the US military presence on the continent. Moscow certainly hopes to exploit this point and to make clear that although the US military presence will eventually end, the Soviet Union will be a permanent political, economic, and military force on the continent. (Nevertheless, the Soviets presumably recognize that discussion of force reductions could also serve to reassure the West Europeans that any US troop withdrawal will be accompanied by a similar diminution of Soviet forces.)

3. Finally, the issue of mutual force reductions can readily be harnessed to one of the main objectives of the USSR's European policy--formal recognition and treatment of the GDR as a sovereign state. It would be virtually impossible to exclude East Germany from participating in negotiations on this subject, and participation would accord it a status West Germany and its allies have long withheld. Even progress toward negotiations would have some effect, although only actual talks would produce durable formal results. Much of the difficulty in the Berlin negotiations arises from Western unwillingness to acknowledge GDR claims to sovereignty (in this case primarily with respect to civilian access to Berlin), and the Soviets now have an alternate route by which to buttress East Germany's efforts toward wider international recognition. This is not to say that the USSR will lose all interest in the Berlin talks, but having provided itself with a second track on the GDR question, it now has the option of switching back and forth between them as circumstances dictate.

#### Military and Economic Factors in Force Reductions

4. There are virtually no compelling military arguments against force reductions from the Soviet viewpoint. Soviet forces in Eastern Europe are considerably in excess of those needed for security and police functions. The Soviets maintain 20 motorized rifle and armor divisions in East Germany, but only two divisions in Poland, four in Hungary, and five in Czechoslovakia. The bulk of forces in the GDR

SECRET

SECRET

serve basically as a defense against NATO rather than merely to keep East Germany in line. We cannot judge what the Soviets conceive to be their security requirement in East Germany, but it seems likely that they could contemplate a reduction of a quarter or a third of their forces without undue alarm--if opposing NATO forces could be simultaneously pared. Indeed, the maintenance of the present-level Soviet force in East Germany since the late 1950s probably has been, in some measure, the product of inertia and an unwillingness to take the requisite political decisions to reduce it. Also, the presence of five Soviet divisions in Czechoslovakia since 1968 might serve to help quiet earlier military qualms about force reductions.

5. The reassignment of units withdrawn from Eastern Europe to other areas of potential tension, the Sino-Soviet border, for example, would no doubt commend itself to Soviet military planners. There is some evidence that Soviet ground forces facing NATO have been forced to slow down the pace of modernization to accommodate the Sino-Soviet border build up. Redeployments could enable the Soviets either to increase the rate of the build up against China or the rate of modernization of the residual forces opposite NATO.

6. The effect of any mutual force cut on the military balance between NATO and the Warsaw Pact will of course depend upon the terms of the agreement. Moscow can be confident, however, that it cannot be forced to accept terms so asymmetrical as to worsen its relative position; indeed, it probably expects that, once talks get under way, the pressures for success will result in an agreement that does not fully offset the Soviet advantage in reinforcement capabilities. More distantly, the Soviets may hope that their detente policy, given further momentum by a mutual troop reduction, will at a later stage induce the US and other NATO members to make further, unilateral cuts in their defense efforts.

7. It is difficult to be precise about the degree to which Soviet interest in force reductions is motivated by economic considerations. Even if the

SECRET



SECRET

units withdrawn were demobilized, the immediate reduction in spending would be small in the context of total military spending. On the other hand, since there is considerable debate under way within the Soviet leadership over the allocation of resources, even a nominal shift of resources from defense programs could help to reduce internal criticism of present policies. The Soviets would probably also view the 100,000 or more men that could be released by such force reductions as a welcome addition to their tight labor supply. In the longer term, the removal of the requirement for modernizing these forces would add to the immediate savings. In addition, the Soviets might hope that the symbolic impact of initial progress on European force reductions, together with movement at SALT, could lead to more extensive arms control measures that would entail much more significant savings in the future.

8. Despite all these advantages, it remains true that the USSR has been a long time in coming around to embracing the NATO offer to negotiate. It has hesitated, in large part, because it still was tempted to wait for unilateral US cuts. Evidently a decision was taken, as part of the foreign policy calculations preceding the 24th CPSU Congress, that US domestic sentiment for withdrawals could not be counted on to do the trick but that it could be useful as a pressure on the US position in negotiations.

9. In a larger context, there are fairly clear signs of reservations in Moscow about the general wisdom of the detente approach to Europe. The precise nature of these reservations is unclear, but the defensive tone of remarks by Soviet leaders and authoritative Soviet publications over the past several months suggests that they spring from a deep ideological distrust of Western motives and, probably, a keen sense of vulnerability to the Western influences that would be given freer rein in the East-West contacts inherent in detente. As applied to the question of mutual troop reductions, the argument from such premises probably is that nationalist aspirations in the East European populations, and perhaps in the Communist parties as well, would receive dangerous encouragement from even

SECRET

SECRET

modest withdrawals of Soviet troops. Undoubtedly a few supplement this argument by contending that the present Warsaw Pact - NATO balance is parlous and must be improved by inducing unilateral Western cuts. The leadership has evidently overridden such objections, but they will serve to stiffen the Soviet position if and when talks get under way.

10. The Soviets are also influenced by their long-standing fears about West Germany as a potential military threat. These concerns have greatly diminished in recent years, but residual misgivings may still persist about the relative weight of West Germany in NATO if the US presence is reduced. On balance, however, the advantages of a US reduction probably outweigh, in Soviet calculations, these more hypothetical dangers.

#### Elements of the Soviet Negotiating Position

11. In terms of negotiating tactics, the Soviets can be expected to try to put NATO on the defensive at the outset of any negotiations. Their proposals would probably be simple and appealing; designed to contrast favorably with complicated and cautious NATO formulas. Moscow might propose, for example, an across-the-board cut in foreign troop levels by a quarter or a third, a similar cut in national forces in the two Germanies and perhaps some of their immediate neighbors, and the elimination of all nuclear weapons within this zone. The Soviets might well be willing to leave to NATO the burden of initially spelling out the definition of troops, and relation between numbers of troops and military units, the problem of equipment levels, etc.

12. Generally, however, Moscow has thus far responded to Western attempts to probe its negotiating position with deliberate obscurity. This tactic is likely to persist for some time, since the very prospect of negotiations works, in the view of Moscow, to its advantage. Thus there is little basis for detailed prediction of what proposals the USSR might ultimately table at a conference.

SECRET

SECRET

13. A primary Soviet objective would be to obtain a significant withdrawal of US troops from Europe and a reduction of NATO advantages in such areas as tactical nuclear weapons. In addition, Moscow might make proposals aimed at blocking the future creation of a European nuclear force. These would be intended not only to prevent the development of such a European force but also to complicate, if possible, the general integration process within the EC.

14. As for the area of coverage, the USSR probably will want to concentrate on reductions in Central Europe and also to press for provisions intended to deny the US the option of relocating troops in the UK or Iberia. With respect to the Mediterranean there are arguments for and against its inclusion from the Soviet standpoint: the USSR would like to reduce NATO's naval advantage here, but it would not wish to limit its ability to support its Arab clients or to expand its own growing capabilities.

15. It is far too early to speculate on whether Moscow "really" wants an agreement on mutual force reductions. The Soviets are not likely to be sure themselves until they have a better idea of what kind of terms might be attainable. The political mileage the topic affords, the eventual degree of unity NATO can maintain, and the inherent complications of the problem all suggest that, although the USSR will not fail to put together an appealing proposal, it will want to retain considerable flexibility for some time to come. A reduction of the US presence in Europe will probably be its main specific objective, but it cannot now be determined what price Moscow might ultimately be willing to pay for this, or indeed whether it may not see even greater advantage in an indefinite political manipulation of the issue.

SECRET